

an end user: a control unit for generating a newsletter based upon the inputs of the sponsor, said newsletter providing a plurality of content items; means for emailing the newsletter to the end user; means for permitting the end user to define new types of content the end user desires to receive; means for the end user to define tasks within the system based upon the content of the newsletter; and means for the end user to invite other end users to receive the newsletter.

[0021] In still a further embodiment of the present invention, the invention is directed to a system in which email newsletters can be sent out to exclusive lists of clients for a particular sponsor. In a further embodiment, the sponsor can control elements such as the address, email firm button and announcement heading.

[0022] In still another embodiment, the invention provides a comprehensive reporting system and a plurality of channels. The system may also be audio enabled.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0023] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the database of the present invention.

[0025] FIG. 3 is a diagram of the database of the present invention.

[0026] FIGS. 4 to 24 illustrate a series of input screens for use by clients in conjunction with a legal request for proposal generation system in accordance with the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0027] The present invention is directed to a system for creating, managing and distributing newsletters, e-zines and similar communications over a communication network using, for example, personal computers and similar devices. In particular, the present invention is directed to a system for providing newsletters and ezines which can be constructed and controlled based upon the desires or needs of a sponsor or an end user.

[0028] While the present invention is being described in the context of a system using a personal computer, the configuration of the end user device is not critical to the present invention. The present invention may be used with any system that connects to the Internet or uses other IP transport methods. The end user device can comprise any end user device which can connect to a network such as a wireless device, palm pilot, PDA, end user work station or hand-held device.

[0029] In a most preferred embodiment, the present invention is directed to a system for creating, publishing and editing online newsletters, e-zines and the like. Over the past fifteen (15) years, personal computers have become relatively powerful and inexpensive and have gained widespread use in a significant number of homes and businesses. With a modem, personal computers can communicate with other computers through communication networks and access many resources on the so-called "Information Super Highway." Companies such as America Online, CompuServe and Prodigy, which traditionally provided so-called "content" over proprietary networks, have begun to provide

access by personal computer users to an expansive international network of computer networks known as the Internet.

[0030] As is well known by those skilled in the art, the World Wide Web is a graphical sub-network of the Internet. With common "Web Browser" software such as Mosaic, Netscape Navigator, or Microsoft Explorer, end users may easily access Internet information and services on the World Wide Web. A web browser handles the functions of locating and targeting information on the Internet and displaying the information provided by the Web Server. The World Wide Web utilizes technology called "Hyper-Text" to organize, search and present information on the Internet. Using a web browser, the end user can select a word ("Hyper-Text word") from a view document and be linked to another document featuring information related to the word.

[0031] The present invention is broadly directed to a computer network for distributing information regarding the placement and creation of newsletters and e-zines for a wide variety of professional related information. The present invention is designed, in one embodiment, to be utilized on the World Wide Web or Internet, although the present invention is equally applicable to other network environments. As noted above, the present invention is similarly related to user interfaces which are not computers such as palm pilots, wireless and cellular devices.

[0032] Referring to FIG. 1, the operational background and structures of a most preferred embodiment of the present invention is disclosed and shown. The most preferred embodiment comprises a central computer server 10 connected by a computer network 12 to remote end user stations 14. The central server connects to a database 150. In a preferred embodiment, end user stations 14 comprise a plurality of end users 16, 18. End users 16, 18 are defined herein as individuals linked to the system who may comprise sponsors, members, affiliates and advertisers who utilize the system.

[0033] For purposes of this disclosure, a sponsor is an organization which creates or uses the ezine creation, management and distribution system of the present invention to provide content and other applications for end users which may be clients, prospective clients or referral sources. Users 16, 18 are linked with the central computer server 10 via a transport medium 30. End users 16, 18 will typically comprise employers and employees who, in a most preferred embodiment, will be linked via a global computer network 12 such as the Internet or Worldwide web, but other embodiments including LANs, WANs and Intranets, fulfill the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0034] The end user devices 16, 18 will typically comprise any device that connects to the system via the Internet or other IP transport methods and includes, but is not limited to, such devices as televisions, computers, hand-held devices, cellular phones, land based telephones, wireless electronic devices and any device which uses a transport medium 30. Non-limiting examples of a transport medium 30 applicable for use in the present invention comprise any backbone or link such as an ATM link, FDDI link, satellite link, cable, cellular, twisted pair, fiber optic, broadcast wireless network, the internet, the world wide web, local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), or any other kind of intranet environment such a standard Ethernet link. In such alternative cases, the clients will communicate with the system